

**PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19  
DOCKET NO. 2020-106-A**

**SUMMARY OF COMMENTS OF DUKE ENERGY CAROLINAS, LLC AND  
DUKE ENERGY PROGRESS, LLC FILED PURSUANT TO ORDER 2020-372**

Duke Energy Carolinas and Duke Energy Progress recognize the profound financial impact of this pandemic and proactively implemented several significant measures to help customers cope with potential financial hardship due to COVID-19. This included suspending service disconnections for non-payments, suspending collections, and waiving late payment, returned check and other fees. We've also relaxed some of our payment arrangement policies. In addition, we created a dedicated website that includes information on our response and helpful resources for customers.

To help alleviate financial concerns, we are proactively reaching out via text, email and outbound calls to South Carolina residential and small business customers who are more than 60 days late on their bills and offering to enroll them in deferred payment arrangements based on their individual circumstances. We've also begun an outbound call campaign to crisis assistance agencies across the state to ensure we have the most current information on their capacity to serve customers in need. This allows us to better direct our customers to community resources that may offer them additional financial assistance. Additionally, we have sent and will continue to send broad and targeted communications to customers reminding them of ways to save on their energy bills.

While the Companies have encouraged customers to pay as much as they can to avoid higher bills later, we understand this pandemic has created real financial hardships for some of our customers and communities. As we develop plans to resume normal billing and payment processes, we will continue to monitor those impacts and recognize this needs to be a thoughtful process that provides customers with increased flexibility.

To support our communities, the Duke Energy Foundation has made a variety of donations to help local health and human services nonprofits, including those providing meals to children and families impacted by school closures. This includes \$760,000 in South Carolina aid during the pandemic, including more than \$400,000 in direct COVID-19 relief and additional funds to help areas hard hit by tornadoes in April.

The health and safety of our employees is a top priority as well. Some of the actions we have taken to support our employees include: activating work at home protocols for about 18,000 employees across the enterprise in mid-March and implementing new safety procedures, which have been particularly important during storm restorations and nuclear outages. In order to protect critical operational staff, we have implemented rotating shifts, enhanced personal protective equipment, additional disinfectant cleaning, temperature checks and expanded visitor restrictions.

Duke Energy Carolinas and Duke Energy Progress are planning for a return to normal operations, just as many are across the state. Our goal is to work with customers as South Carolina continues to open the economy. While we plan on re-instituting certain normal business practices, this is not expected to occur until later in the summer. Through all of this, we will continue to communicate with our customers. Our workforce will also begin slowly returning to offices, in a staggered timeframe, beginning in June 2020 while abiding by CDC guidance on social distancing and protections.

We are also tracking impacts to the financial strength of the company. While there has been a small increase in residential electricity usage from people working from home, this hasn't made up for the loss in load usually required by the many businesses that have closed. As a result, we've seen a decrease in revenue while also experiencing increased operating costs. We agree with the observation by ORS that reduced usage is impacting the fixed cost recovery and revenue assumptions included in rates designed to collect costs incurred to serve customers. These costs include not only ongoing operational and financing costs, but the borrowings necessary to support extended payment arrangements. It is important to note that Duke Energy Carolinas and Duke Energy Progress have taken on these challenges and offered assistance at a time when the companies' revenues and financial position have been greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite these challenges, one thing that has not changed is our commitment and our obligation to keep the lights on, and we take this very seriously. Spring storms – including a deadly tornado in Oconee County – have damaged our system and outages have further interrupted the lives of our customers. Our team has responded each and every time with the high level of excellence this commission and our customers have come to expect. We provide this even as line technicians and other first responders operate under procedures that are new to the workforce. As hurricane season fast approaches, the Duke Energy Carolinas and Duke Energy Progress teams will be ready. Whether the challenges are COVID-19 or storms, we are committed to providing the energy our customers and South Carolina rely on.